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The situation in the Middle East

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Security Council
Fifty-eighth year

Letter dated 31 March 2003 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing in order to draw your attention to the latest act of Palestinian terrorism perpetrated against the citizens of Israel.

This past Sunday afternoon, 30 March, at approximately 1 p.m. (local time), a suicide bomber perpetrated an attack at a busy café in the Israeli coastal city of Netanya, scattering human remains and shrapnel throughout the area. Were it not for actions taken by an Israeli bystander to obstruct the terrorist, the human costs would have been far greater. The attack wounded 58 people, including six with serious to critical injuries. The city of Netanya has been the target of 14 terrorist attacks in the past two years, including the Passover Massacre at the Park Hotel, which killed 29 Israeli civilians, almost exactly one year ago. Ramadan Shallah, secretary general of the terrorist organization Islamic Jihad, which operates from Syria, claimed responsibility for the attack, in a statement issued from Shallah's Damascus office. He added that Sunday's bombing was a "gift to the heroic people of Iraq", and vowed to carry out more attacks.

Yesterday's bombing is merely the latest attempt by Palestinian terrorists to target Israeli civilians. Countless terrorist attacks have been prevented in recent weeks by the extraordinary efforts of Israel's security personnel. Later on Sunday, soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces thwarted an attempted attack by two Palestinian men who tried to infiltrate Kibbutz Erez, located in the south of country. This continuing daily threat of Palestinian terrorism underscores the absolute necessity of Israel's preventive security measures.

Israel continues to hold the Palestinian leadership fully responsible for the ongoing campaign of terrorism deliberately aimed at Israeli civilians. Rather than acting to suppress acts of terrorism — which is their obligation under international law, Security Council resolutions and signed commitments reached with Israel —

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the Palestinian leadership continues, at every opportunity, to express its support for acts of violence against Israeli civilians. Israel calls upon the Palestinian leadership and regimes such as that of Syria, which brazenly continue to sponsor and glorify acts of terrorism, to genuinely renounce this strategy, and to take concerted action to disarm and de-legitimize terrorist groups operating freely in their territory, in accordance with international obligations. As long as murderers are glorified as martyrs, and attacking civilians is perceived as legitimate, the phenomenon of Palestinian terrorism is bound to continue, endangering the lives of both Palestinians and Israelis and placing ever greater obstacles on the road to peace. Only when terrorism is fully and finally rejected as an acceptable tactic can we advance to a process of negotiations, which are the only means of achieving a genuine and lasting peace between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples.

Israel calls upon the international community to reaffirm its absolute rejection of terrorist tactics and to use its authority to compel all regimes that sponsor and incite terrorism to fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with international law, signed agreements, and Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 1373 (2001).

I submit this letter in follow-up to numerous letters detailing the campaign of Palestinian terrorism that began in September 2000, which document the criminal terrorist strategy for which the terrorists and their supporters must be held fully accountable.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of this letter circulated as a document of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 160 and 36, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Arye **Mekel**
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.